

# CONSERVATION PLANNING

## You and Your Land

CONSERVATION INFORMATION SHEET

GENERAL SERIES September 1997



Natural Resources Conservation Service

Michigan



### What is Conservation Planning?

Conservation planning is a process to help you decide how to manage your land. This decision is based on your objectives and the present and future condition of your natural resources. Natural resources include soil, water, air, plants, and animals.

### Where Planning Applies

All land can benefit from conservation planning. By following the conservation planning process, you will be able to make informed decisions about managing your land. A conservation plan can also help you to comply with federal, state, and local laws and regulations.

### How a Conservation Plan Works

In conservation planning --

- Participation is voluntary and flexible.
- You make the decisions and carry them out.
- It is your plan for the land you own or use.
- The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and conservation districts are ready to help you.

A conservation plan is required for you to be eligible for United States Department of Agriculture programs such as the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP).

### Where to Get More Assistance

Additional local assistance may be obtained from the local office of a Michigan Conservation District or the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) office at:

## The Planning Process

The conservation planning process can be broken into three phases. During the first phase, you will work together with a conservation planner to understand your natural resources, your current conservation program, and your plans and goals.

During the second phase, the conservation planner will outline and discuss the different ways that you can accomplish your goals while protecting and improving your natural resources. You make the decision on how to treat each unit of land. These treatments are known as conservation practices. The conservation planner can give many good alternatives and make some economic comparisons, but you must decide what you want to do, when, and how.

The third phase in the conservation planning process is putting the plan into operation. The Natural Resources Conservation Service and your local Conservation District can provide assistance in applying many of the

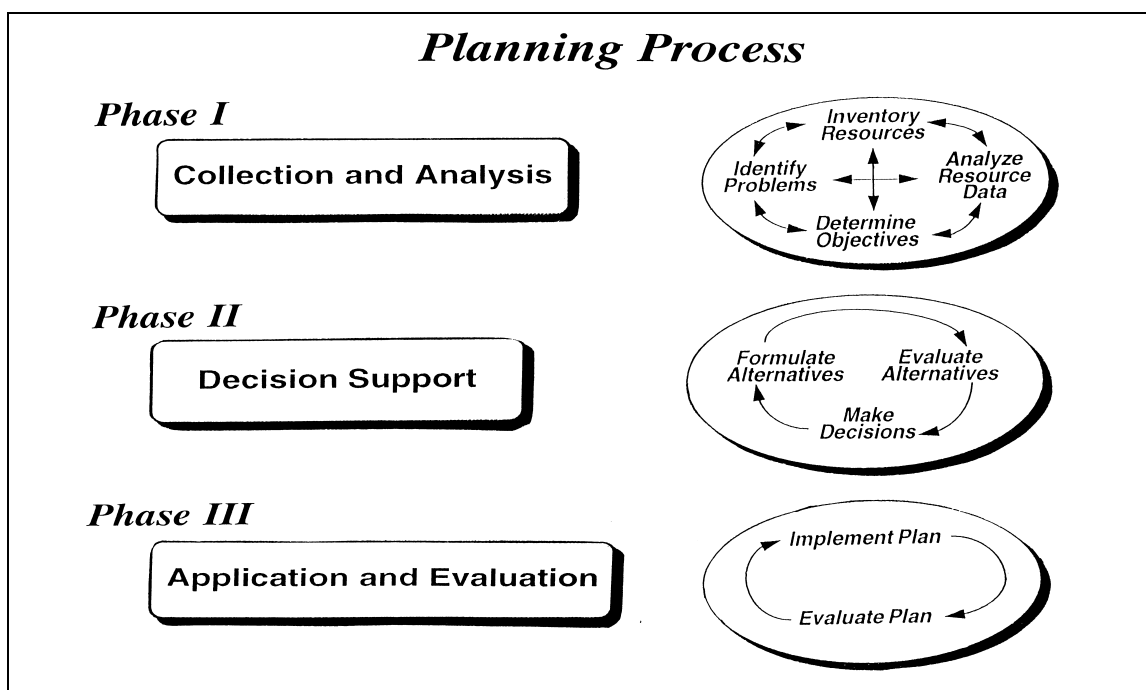
practices. They can direct you to neighbors who have applied conservation practices similar to those you will be using.

After you begin implementing your plan, the conservation planner will help you evaluate the effectiveness of your plan and suggest changes if needed.

### Why Plan?

Conservation planning can supply you with the information that you need to make informed decisions about how you use your land. Your plan is based on a thorough understanding of your natural resources and your goals. You can make decisions that result in the following:

- protecting the natural resources for generations to come.
- compliance with laws and regulations.
- eligibility for financial assistance in implementing the plan when available.



## How Much Land Do I Plan?

You decide how much land to plan. You may have a specific problem such as a washout or an abandoned well that you would like to fix. The conservation planner will work with you, following the conservation planning process, to help you understand your soil, water, air, plant and animal resources on the area where the problem occurs -- for example, the field with the washout or the building area where the abandoned well is located. You then can make an informed decision about treating that problem and any others that were identified during the planning process.

You may not have a specific problem in mind when you request assistance in developing a conservation plan. You may want some advice on how to manage a particular area of your property -- a woodlot, for example. Or you may be considering a change in management or objectives and

you want to know the possible impacts on the environment. The conservation planner would then work with you on that area of your property.

If you choose, you may request the conservation planner to work with you on your entire operation. What's important in conservation planning is not the *quantity* of land included, but the *quality* of the decisions for managing that land.

## For More Information

Additional information may be obtained from the World Wide Web site (<http://www.info.usda.gov/NRCS/mi/>).

Also, see the Natural Resources Conservation Service "National Planning Procedures Handbook."

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I would like a conservation plan

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime Phone \_\_\_\_\_

I have the following concerns about my land (check all that apply):

Soil

- ☐ Erosion
- ☐ Compaction/Tilth

Air

- ☐ Odors from manure

Plants

- ☐ Not enough trees
- ☐ Need better nutrient management

Animals

- ☐ Not enough wildlife
- ☐ Too much wildlife

Water

- ☐ Excess water in the soil
- ☐ Not enough moisture
- ☐ Sediment in the water
- ☐ Nutrients/pesticides in surface water
- ☐ Nutrients/pesticides in groundwater
- ☐ Manure in surface water

Other

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Return this form to:**

This Conservation Sheet prepared by:

Vicki S. Anderson, Resource Conservationist, USDA-NRCS, (MI)

Gary Rinkenberger, Resource Conservationist, USDA-NRCS, (MI)

Reference/File Indexes

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References:

National Planning Procedures Handbook

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